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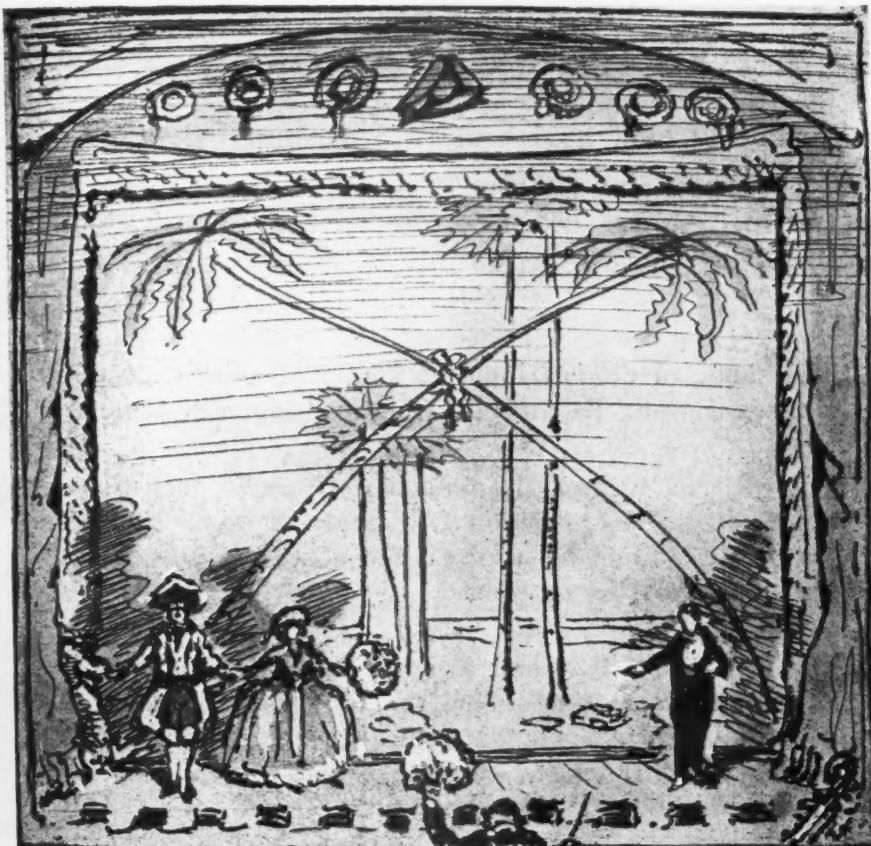
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DRAMA

New Series

JANUARY MCMXXIII

Number 24



"POLLY" AT THE KINGSWAY
THEATRE: NOTE FOR DROP CURTAIN BY WILLIAM NICHOLSON

Issued by the BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE, a Federation of Societies and other Organizations working for the Development of the Drama. Individual Membership is also open to all who are concerned with the practice or enjoyment of the Art of the Theatre, and may be acquired by payment of the Annual Subscription of £1 1s., entitling the Member to all privileges of the League, including the free receipt of the League's Monthly Magazine. Full particulars from the Hon. Sec.,
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GREEK PLAYS AND THE DALCROZE METHOD

By J. T. Sheppard

ON December 13th the Electra of Euripides was acted in Professor Murray's version, by students of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. The performance was interesting in many ways: first, as a proof, if proof were still needed, that on the stage (whatever pedantry may matter in the study) Professor Murray's translations make fine acting plays; secondly, as an indication of the versatility and enthusiasm of the students of the Academy, who, at short notice, and in addition to the heavy programme of their regular work were able to contrive what was, on the whole, a convincing representation of an admittedly difficult play—a play over which innumerable scholars and critics have shaken sceptical heads. Particularly impressive were the tragic strength and the restraint of Miss Hilda Case, as Electra, the noble carriage and the fine elocution of Miss Valerie Taylor as a very royal Clytaemnestra. And to me, at any rate, the performance of Mr. Charles Hickman as Orestes, seemed to hold promise of a distinguished art. He played Orestes, not as the buoyant, melodramatic hero of tradition, but as a youth of gentle impulse, self-distrustful, almost timid, driven first by the authority of religion, then by the overwhelming strength of his sister's will for vengeance, into a crime from which he shrinks, and which in fact ruins his life. I am not sure that Professor Murray's version emphasises this aspect of the character so much as does the original, and I am inclined to think that the audience, to-day as in the time of Euripides, expected rather an Orestes who would be strong in the grim sense in which, to her own undoing, Electra is strong. But I am quite sure that Euripides meant what Mr. Hickman thought he meant, and, in all the circumstances I venture to think that it is a considerable achievement for a young actor to convey so well as he did—he could have done it without the splendid work of Electra to support him—the subtle human tragedy which was, if I am right, the poet's central theme. For Elec-

tra's own tragedy is bound up with a tragedy of this well-meaning, well-liking ill-starred youth. She herself lived in a world of melodrama, dreaming of conventional revenge. She looked for a brother who should be a conventional, splendid, brave and brilliant hero. Instead, she found a brother who might have been a very pleasant friend, which is far better. She made him play out to the bitter end the part of "hero." She ruined him as well as herself, and, when it was too late, she saw what she had done. And he, with his life in ruins, had no reproaches for her.

But primarily the performance was intended as an experiment in the application of the Dalcroze method to the treatment of the choral odes. "It will be seen," the programme told us, "what results can be obtained by competent teachers without elaborate training." Let me confess that before the event I had been sceptical. So often, when Greek plays are performed, the appearance of the chorus is a signal for boredom. So often the music of the words is lost in a melancholy sort of chanting, accompanied by an irrelevant and meaningless gesture, of yearning misery or rapture which the performers fondly imagine must be somehow Greek in spirit, since at any rate nobody could possibly suppose it English. In this performance I felt no such difficulty. The words were either sung by two or three very competent invisible singers—I should have liked to have them visible, as part of the conventional grouping—or else declaimed by single voices on the stage, while the main chorus moved. The music was appropriate and, I thought, exciting: Miss Driver had obtained remarkable results with the simple use of a harp, a flute, and—most dramatic addition—a big drum. And the movements of the chorus—intelligent students of the Academy, but not any of them trained exponents of the Dalcroze method—seemed to me to have a completeness and significance not often achieved. The moral which suggests itself is this: that if a Greek play were presented by students

already familiar with the art of rhythmical movement, and trained for this particular kind of performance by teachers as competent of Miss Beck and Miss Driver, and if they were supplied with music specially composed to fit the rhythms of the Greek original, and subsequently fitted out with an English version, which might be made by Professor Murray or by Mr. R. C. Treve-

lyan, or by some other poet who is familiar with Greek metres, the Greek chorus would become not only beautiful, as lyric, but dramatically relevant, in a way and to a degree that would delight and astonish the audience. I hope the Dalcroze Society will be encouraged to make this further experiment.

"MODERN TROUBADOURS"

Reviewed by Eric J. Patterson

If Gibbon had written the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" in one short volume, the result could not have helped being pleasing, but it would have been inadequate: for one would have been probably well aware of the fall, but would have missed the decline. It is so very difficult to write about books on great events adequate in matter without being dull in the reading, as every school-boy reader, though unfortunately not every writer, of school history books, knows to his cost. "Modern Troubadours"** is a very short book for such a big subject, as the great artistic experiment of concerts and plays at the Front during the war, but it is never a dull book. The writer has far too great a sense of humour and has far too much of the artistic temperament ever to allow herself to become merely pedagogic. Whether the book appeals to you as adequate to the occasion will depend on your idea of relativity and your knowledge or ignorance of the means whereby publishers can give the public what it wants as well as what is good for it. One may well think that the book will put a certain number of people into a very healthy state of rage. The good old Puritan of the Y.M.C.A. is rightly given a very prominent place for a very good reason. In his unconverted state, that is, in his state of antagonism to the theatre as a creation of the devil, and to artists as children of Satan, he was hardly very helpful in enabling one to overcome difficulties; in his converted state, he might prove an even greater, though more pleasing, embarrassment by writing plays on biblical subjects,

which ignored all the little trivial conventions of the theatre, and which he expected to be produced at once. In either state he was one of the obstacles to success which make the success all the greater when achieved. But the majority of the Y.M.C.A. workers were neither Puritans nor anti-Puritans. Several of them were far and away too busy to think of anything but the canteens, but there were many of them who saw in the Lena Ashwell concert and theatrical parties not only a means of doing a very valuable and necessary work for the troops; but also an experiment big in its possibilities for the welfare of the nation after the war. These Y.M.C.A. workers fought the unconverted Puritan, and the military probably made the passage of the artists less difficult. And there were a few military as well as religious Puritans in the bases; men who opposed entertainments for the troops on grounds of discipline, believing that as there had not been concerts at the front during the Crimean war, the men would have been better employed cleaning their buttons than listening to music.

After all, one of the few great compensations of the war was the fact that it threw various types of people together, and it was not a misfortune that Miss Ashwell had to work through the Y.M.C.A. The very needs of the work threw the churches and the theatre together, let us hope to their mutual, if sometimes embarrassing, advantage. There will be people who will say of Miss Ashwell, as they say of the editors of anthologies of poems, that she has left unnoticed those things which ought to have been noticed, and given undue emphasis to things which might have been forgotten.

**Modern Troubadours*. By Lena Ashwell. Gylodal. 5s. net.

Here is a criticism which she no doubt expected; but it is a criticism which the general reader will hardly consider fair. For when it is remembered that the work covered England, France, Malta, Egypt and Palestine, the verdict will probably be that a very good general picture has been given. Most people will forgive any lapses for the account which is given of the use to which G. B. Shaw was put after the Armistice. There had been serious riots in the Harfleur valley after the Armistice. "The riots lasted all night, and there was some shooting. The next day the men were, to put it mildly, in a difficult mood. The Repertory Company was telegraphed for. Their arrangements were made for the evening; but it was urged that they must cancel their previous engagements. After some deliberation they decided that the triple bill was not suitable, as the change of subject prevents the concentration of interest. The only three-act play they had ready was 'Candida,' by George Bernard Shaw. They drove up from Havre to the valley, feeling very uneasy and nervous of their powers. The signs of the outbreak surrounded them, and though the hut was full, the feeling was electric. Anything might have started fresh trouble. They began the play, and for the first five minutes it seemed uncertain what might happen. Gradually the men grew interested, and the evil spell was broken. The expressions of gratitude from those in authority here were very sincere: they said the play had been invaluable, for it had changed the current of the men's thoughts." Experience at the Lyric Theatre at Havre, as well as the army theatre in Cologne, did seem to justify the opinion that Shaw was the most popular dramatist in the eyes of the theatre-going soldier. What was the reason Mr. Shaw may himself tell us some day, if he is not too frightened of his new fame.

"Modern Troubadours," as far as it concerns the work during the war is written on an optimistic note; but in the last chapter the tone seems completely to change. "Recreation and the National Life" is a fine piece of writing; but it is as pessimistic as Dean Inge or as Mr. St. John Ervine, when he is calling down his curses upon the theatre-powers of the business man in the columns of the *Observer*. After all the change is

very natural. Miss Ashwell is not attempting to give a critical study; to explain why it is that during the war men were so responsive to the appeal of art, whilst in the years after the war the theatre seems on the point of death. She is merely trying to give her impressions and to make an appeal to England to save herself by not thinking in terms of bread alone. The Lena Ashwell experiment was a great experiment; and it had an enormous success; but it was carried through under the most favourable possible conditions. The emotions of the theatre-going people at home were no doubt things of slop and false sentiment, exploited by vested interests, but among the troops in France the condition of affairs was far otherwise. One had not to consider the box office, nor the Press, nor the weather. The Tommies had been up against realities; their hearts were touched with the thoughts of home, whilst at the same time that great comradeship which bound them all together, extended from the audience to the players. It was easy enough to see when one watched a play in France, that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts; in England it is unfortunately often less.

Yet there is really no need to be pessimistic. There was bound to be a reaction after the emotional strain of the war. Some people naturally had to go to sleep, whilst other people were far too busy to think. But England is beginning to wake and think; and England will remember. Only success will not be so easily won. Perhaps it is in the interest of art that it should not be: nor talent so quickly rewarded. The path to the sun is steep, but it exists, and the sun is brighter than any number of stars, which only shine at night. Concerts and theatres at the front are things of the past: long live the Once-a-week Players.

The North London Group announce their production of "Tilly of Bloomsbury," for Saturday, January 13th, 1923, in the Great Hall of the Northern Polytechnic, Holloway Road, N.7. Doors open at 7.0 p.m. Commence 7.30 p.m. Prices of admission, 3s. 6d., 2s. 4d. and 1s. 3d. Miss Babs O'Hagon in the title rôle. Play produced by Mr. Walter Lockwood.



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

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Telephone: GERRARD, 3157.

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this journal.

THE fact that it was necessary to go to Press with the magazine almost immediately after the Drama League meeting at the Conference of Educational Associations, on Friday, December 20th, prevents our dealing adequately with the meeting in this issue. The meeting, represents, however, an important development in the League's activities, since this was the first occasion when we have been instrumental in holding a public meeting on the subject of the National Theatre. The primary object of the gathering was to enforce the claims of the National Theatre on the attention of those engaged in educational work, and Miss Lena Ashwell put our case with her customary breadth of view and emphasis, when she said that everyone interested in education should do something in their own district to awaken the feeling that literature, especially dramatic literature, was a very potent force in the evolution of a human being. She believed that we should have to move through civic effort. When we have worked in an individualistic way we should combine and put up a great

memorial of Shakespeare. Every actor longed for a National Memorial Shakespeare Theatre, because such a theatre would represent the very finest work our art could provide for the people. The Master of the Temple also affirmed that teachers could help the movement by spreading the idea of the good to be expected from the establishment of such a Theatre. Mr. Clodesley Brereton had some very interesting things to say on the work of the Comedie Français in Paris, and incidentally referred to the influence of the Conservatoire in maintaining a good standard of speech.

For some while past the Council of the Drama League have been very much concerned with this question of the National Theatre, but they are convinced that no valid attempt can be made to second the efforts of the present Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee, till much more has been done in awakening the general public to the need for a National Theatre. At an early date we hope to make an announcement in regard to the League's policy in this matter.

Since the last issue of DRAMA, the following have become affiliated to the League:—

Aldbury Group
Miss Emma K. Crawford
Alleyn's School Debating Society
R. M. S. Pasley, Esq.
Bournemouth Dramatic and Orchestral Club
Miss Dorothy Mead
Crayford Educational Fellowship
Miss L. White
Dundee Training College Dramatic Society
Miss Ellen C. Abbot
Herefordshire Federation of Women's Institutes
Mrs. Ord Capper
Literary and Dramatic Society, Kenton Lodge Training College
Miss L. M. Shepherd
Lucilla Amateur Dramatic Society
A. Fieth, Esq.
Milton Congregational Church Amateur Dramatic Society
Miss Clara Henderson
Overseas League Dramatic Club
The Secretary
Pack Amateur Dramatic Society
Mrs. C. Moray Graham
Ranger Guides
Miss M. E. Montgomery
St. Andrew's 1920 Club
Miss C. E. A. Macdonald

THE LESSON OF OBERAMMERGAU

The work of the players of Oberammergau, so famous throughout the world during last summer, is a highly important event. Its importance lies in the fact that a village of some three or four thousand people has produced a large company of actors who can really act. It is well known that the members of this company are village workers, peasants, schoolmasters, road cleaners, and, best of all, children. But no one would suggest that the Passion Play was amateurish. The excellent acting of "Judas Iscariot," of "Christus," of "Pontius Pilate," of "Mary Magdalene" is well known. But still more remarkable were the children of the play. How often in our English theatres does one feel distressed for the child actor! The performance seems painful for him and it is no pleasure to us. But children do not act like that at Oberammergau. The most dramatic moment of the Passion Play is the entry of Christ into Jerusalem. The boys and girls went mad with joy to see Christ on his donkey come to their village. They frolicked around him as children frolic around a maypole. They were playing, and they played with that wild, sincere play of children who are very happy. The audience was carried away, it rejoiced and wept with the young Bavarians.

Unfortunately the significance of the Oberammergau Play has been sadly blurred by reviewers. A village of artists was not enough for them and so they have invented a village of saints. The brilliance of the acting is explained by saying that the performers "really live the part in ordinary life." (One wonders what "Judas Iscariot" and "Mary Magdalene" make of this).

Such sentiment is harmful. The lesson of Oberammergau is just this: "My village could do the same." But if the journalists are right in adding "Only saints need apply," my village will never do anything.

"My village," however, may take heart, for those who know and love the Oberammergans do not accuse them of undue sanctity. An ordinary mortal may live there in perfect comfort. And ordinary mortals else-

where have quite enough sanctity to make them as successful as the Passion Players.

It is not, of course, suggested that English villages should import the famous Bavarian pageant. The Oberammergans of the seventeenth century, when they began their play, did nothing of the kind. They wrote their own drama, and they wrote it around that subject which meant most to them at the time. That is exactly what every other village might do.

Other villages might indeed do better than Oberammergau which is sadly handicapped by many bad mistakes. In the first place Oberammergau believes that no drama is so worth while as one which has a biblical story as its plot and all its characters taken, or supposed to be taken, from the Bible. Another serious handicap is the exclusion of all married women from the Passion Play.

Worst of all, however, is a strange confusion of thought about the very nature of acting. It is held that for the production of their great drama nothing must be artificial, nothing put on; all must be real and natural in a very strict sense. Even such simple artifices as wigs are prohibited. Actors requiring long hair or beards must grow their own. Artificial colouring is not permitted for performers' faces (though it is permitted for their boots). Even artificial light is taboo, with the result that the stage is often the darkest part of the theatre!

All this is bad, but the Passion Play is great in spite of it. How much better might not some British Oberammergaus become where stage managers were free to use any trick they knew, where dramatists were not confined to Bibles, where performers were not top-heavy with ill-fitting halos!

Mr. J. T. Sheppard's English Version of the "Œdipus Tyrannus" will be played by members of Cambridge University at the A.D.C. Theatre, Cambridge, on the evenings of February 3rd, 5th, 6th and 7th, at 7.0 and 8.30, and subsequently on February 10th, in London, at an Educational Matinee organised by the Chiswick Education Committee, and Sir Oswald Stoll at the Chiswick Empire. The Version is published by the Cambridge University Press, price 2s.

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

THE SHEFFIELD REPERTORY COMPANY.

Last year the Sheffield Repertory Company which has its headquarters at the Little Theatre in Shipton Street, one of the poorer parts of the city, completed a very successful season's work. The financial results, whilst not being all that could be desired, have not given rise for undue alarm, and, taking into consideration the trade depression which has hovered over the city—and which has had its effects on theatres generally—the Little Theatre's results are very gratifying.

The limitations which the tiny theatre and stage impose on producer and players are many—but these have been surmounted and most of the difficulties have been reduced to a minimum.

The Sheffield Repertory Company is fortunate in possessing the services of a capable director in Mr. H. M. Prentice, and the successes achieved since the theatre's inception are in no small measure due to the untiring efforts and hard work of Mr. Prentice. Mr. Prentice in turn has the good fortune to have a very capable band of unpaid actors, whose work has been, and is of the highest character, and who have done much to further and establish good drama in Sheffield.

Besides being a producer, Mr. Prentice possesses the designer's talent, and those who have witnessed the productions at the Little Theatre, have been charmed by the artistic stage-settings, which always have as their key-note simplicity. The settings are designed to reduce the scene shifting to a minimum—a very necessary point for the smooth working behind the scenes where the stage space is so limited.

To produce the correct atmosphere of each scene, Mr. Prentice has devised a scheme of his own for portraying by light the ruling emotions and spirit of each scene. The scenes so designed are beautiful, and attract and hold attention even when the players are absent from the stage. These designs have all been carefully planned and worked out in models to scale. From time to time the public of Sheffield has had opportunities of viewing these models at the

Sheffield Educational Settlement, of which the Little Theatre is a part, and one of them was exhibited at the Theatrical Exhibition at South Kensington.

This very important part of play production has saved the Little Theatre and its patrons from the crude and often futile efforts of scene painters, who are too often inclined to label themselves professional. The actual carrying out of the designs is in the hands—and very capable hands—of members of the company.

During the last season, six plays were produced at the Little Theatre: A Triple Bill, "X=O," "Father Noah" and "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets"; "Fanny's First Play"; "The Great Adventure"; "T'Marsdens"; "The Playboy of the Western World," and "The Importance of Being Earnest." "The Silver Box," "A Christmas Carol" and "The Devil's Disciple" were produced by the company at the Montgomery Hall, a more spacious if less comfortable building in the centre of the city.

The season 1922-23 opened in September with "Andromache," followed by "Admiral Guinea" and "Arms and the Man" and "Alice in Wonderland."

It is the aim and hope that before long there will be a Repertory Company permanently established in Sheffield, but that can only be if the public of Sheffield supports it. That they will take a little convincing there is little doubt, but events tend to show that the idea for which the Sheffield Repertory Company are striving, is slowly but surely being accomplished.

ANSTYE TIPTEEERS.

In their Village Hall on December 12th, the Anstye Tipteers gave a charming entertainment of Folk-song and Mime, under the direction of Miss Horn, with the help of her sister, Miss Edith Horn, of Epping.

Miss Horn believes that an audience is never so happy as when exercising its imagination and intelligence. Plainly, the Anstye villagers found sheer delight in listening and watching with an alertness of attention that no London "house," preoccupied with its chocolate-boxes, would dream of

according to the stage. Particularly successful were "The Raggle-taggle Gipsies," "The Brisk Young Widow," "The Dumb Wife Cured," and "The Old Rooster." This last had been taught to the singer by her father when she was a little girl. It was sung without accompaniment and at appropriate moments animal-heads appeared between the back-curtains and joined in.

As usual in village concerts a violin solo—in this instance, "The Londonderry Air," played by an excellent musician, Miss Baker, of Croydon—proved more popular than any song. It rivalled even the mime-play, "Celia and Sylvanio," admirably worked up by the company from a traditional source. One hopes that Miss Horn will "write it down"—for it exists in memory only—that other villages may act it. If she does, she must give hints on acquiring the bold certainty and slickness of movement which characterise her troupe.

M. M.

THE OTTAWA DRAMA LEAGUE.

In pursuance of its object—"The promotion of amateur acting and general interest in the drama, dramatic literature, and productions," the Ottawa Drama League, which last year became affiliated with the British Drama League, has issued an enterprising and varied programme for the present season.

The season was opened in November with an address by Dr. Ramsay Traquair, Professor of Architecture in McGill University, and a prominent member of the Community Players, Montreal, and interest in matters theatrical will be further stimulated by a subsequent lecture by Mr. Bertram Forsyth, the Director of the Hart House Theatre, Toronto, and a visit from Miss Ruth Draper, the brilliant dramatic reciter.

The League itself, which last year produced Pinero's "His House in Order," Galsworthy's "The Silver Box," and Forbes' "The Show Shop" (an American comedy played in England as "The Dress Rehearsal"), will in December give performances of Milne's "Mr. Pim Passes By" at the Russell Theatre, Ottawa, under the direction of Mr. F. L. C. Pereira, and

a second production is promised for the New Year.

In addition to these activities three programmes of one-act plays have been arranged, with a view to the encouragement of new talent, both in play-writing, and in acting.

A MODERN MUMMING PLAY: A CANDID CRITICISM.

As an interesting, and perhaps too rare example of self-criticism, we have pleasure in printing the following letter from a correspondent, the Secretary of one of the first groups to have been affiliated to the League:—

DEAR SIR,—As you are good enough to be rather particularly interested in the — Group, you may like to know with what success we rehearsed and performed our little Christmas play. It was neither a success nor a failure: it made no impression whatever. We rehearsed with great perseverance, continually adding fresh jokes and improvements. However, we did not work very hard and were not quite ready, when we were suddenly invited to produce our play at an entertainment given by the Women's Institute. It was an ineffective performance, but the actors were not chiefly to blame. The play itself was at fault. It was an amateur effort, as you know—I should imagine of average attainment. But I now see quite clearly that the amateur play, unsupported as it is by literary merit, should be very simple in conception and rendering. Now in this play of ours the allegorical characters had been modernized and complicated, and an idea indicated. There were a certain number of topical and real allusions, and a few rather good hits (at least, so we all thought) directed at the audience—doubtless a mistake. In the end they failed to recognize the allegory or to understand it, and as to our jokes they were received in a frozen silence.

I now realize that the old mumming play, arranged, but not essentially altered, on the lines followed by Miss Macnamara, is the right thing for a village Christmas performance. Any radical change must be left to the skilled dramatic artist. X.

THE WALTHAMSTOW REPERTORY THEATRE SOCIETY : ITS AIMS AND IDEALS.

The Walthamstow Repertory Theatre Society was founded in 1920 for the purpose of fostering and extending the love of the Drama among the people. It desires to include in its membership all those to whom the Drama is a serious study as well as a recreation. To this end it aims :

- (1) To found a People's Theatre on a community basis in Walthamstow.
- (2) To combine with other Societies which have a similar object in view, for purposes of mutual help.
- (3) To gain the support of the municipal authorities, believing that the Drama is an educational and social asset.
- (4) To promote the growth of the dramatic and imaginative instinct in the schools.
- (5) To encourage the writing and production of plays.

The ideal life of the Drama is that which springs *from* the people themselves. A Drama which has to be provided *for* the people becomes a mere amusement, and has no intellectual or spiritual value. Dramatic literature interprets the psychology of men and women in its relations to their actions, and calls for the use of the imagination. It thus affords an effective antidote to the effects of modern life, wherein ideals and aspirations are in great measure suppressed. The study of the Drama combines education with recreation : it presents human problems in a forceful and interesting way. Through the medium of the ear as well as of the eye, it makes an appeal, not only to the intellect, but by stagecraft, colour and movement to the aesthetic sense.

There is no reason why Walthamstow should not possess a permanent Repertory Theatre, in which the latent dramatic talent that quite certainly exists among the people can find expression in pageantry, music, elocution and portrayal of character. The establishment of such a Theatre must arise from a desire on the part, and be the work of, the people themselves. In that way only, and in not being dependent on

commercial success for its continuance, can it contribute to the cultural life of the community.

The realization of these ideals is possible. We invite those interested to join us. Write to the Secretary, Miss Olive Tranter, 29, Mersey Road, E.17.

The Society meets in the Walthamstow Settlement, Greenleaf Road, Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., except the second Tuesday in the month.

THE STOCKPORT CONFERENCE.

From the admirable magazine issued by the W.E.A. Dramatic Society, Manchester and Salford Branch, we reprint the following extract from an article by the representative of that Society at the Drama League Conference, held last November at Stockport :—

The Conference Meeting on the Saturday afternoon was very helpful and good work was done, which if it so reaches the desired end of being set into motion will greatly benefit the affiliated dramatic societies throughout the kingdom, particularly the proposals relating to authors' fees, and the publication of DRAMA. Valuable opportunities were seized to discuss matters frankly with delegates from societies as far apart as Bristol and York and Leicester. It was a most encouraging revelation to hear of the great work which has and is being done by amateur societies all over the country, from village groups to town societies, which gives the direct lie with ample substantiation to the recent remark levelled against the amateur by a well-known dramatic critic. One came away convinced that as much more was still to be done and closer association established with kindred societies in a truly progressive co-operative spirit, so should we need to call for the highest service in those around that will enable us, even in our humble way to reach a little nearer, with patient effort and consistency, to that ideal that all who are intelligently interested in good drama so rightly cherish. The Provincial Autumn Conference next year is to be held at Bath. We hope the time is not far distant when Manchester societies will be honoured by an acceptance of an offer inviting the Conference to our own city.

J. H. L.

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